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New York

Chairman: Mr. Rowe ..... (Sierra Leone))

The meeting resumed at 10.35 a.m.

The Chairman: Yesterday, having received the tentative endorsement of our second agenda item, representatives will recall that we discussed the proposal by the United States for a third item. The conclusion was that we might consider the United States proposal in the context of in-depth discussion or consideration not on the agenda.

The representative of the Russian Federation suggested, and we all accepted, that the ideas that I had discussed in informal consultations during the months of June and July concerning the issue of revitalization should be upgraded in the form of a Chair's proposal. Before we suspended the meeting, I gave members an idea of what I was going to include in that written proposal, emphasizing the word "equitable" instead of "equal" allocation.

Yesterday, I prepared that draft and I understand that some delegations received copies of the text and that others did not. It is a very short draft and the Secretariat has already distributed it to delegations in this room. I therefore suggest that we begin by looking at the Chair's proposal on the issue of revitalization and improvement of the working methods of the Disarmament Commission.

I open the floor for discussion on the Chair's proposal.

Mr. Litavrin (Russian Federation): I have looked through the text you proposed, Sir, and I have no problems with it, with the exception of the last line, where you write "in the context of its two agenda items".

Frankly speaking, I do not understand what it means. Are we to understand it as meaning that the third agenda item will be discussed in the framework of agenda items 1 and 2, or do you mean something else? Will it be a kind of separate issue?

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): I thank you, Sir, for preparing the text.

May I just propose two small amendments in line with the proposal by the United States expressed yesterday, in which the phrase "the revitalization and improvement of the working methods of the Commission" should be replaced by the words suggested by our colleague from the United States, which read "agreed that the important issue of measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Disarmament Commission".

On the third line, "will be considered in plenary at substantive session(s)" would be amended to read "will be considered in plenary at its 2006 substantive session".

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): Having recently received this — and I apologize for that — I am not inclined to offer any specific suggestions for improvement at this stage. I would really feel more comfortable submitting this to my capital for its review. I will, of course, report whatever suggestions

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for modification come from this house today. I am going to try to recommend a no-first-use policy for Washington, D.C., and urge them not to offer too many amendments, if at all possible, because I think what we have here is probably a good basis for going forward.

That is where I stand right now, and I am hoping to get a response some time early tomorrow morning from Washington, D.C., not on only this element, but on the package as a whole. That is what I am shooting for.

The Chairman: We have to determine how we will proceed. We have heard the suggestion by the Russian Federation. We also heard a proposal or suggestion from Indonesia. I assume that is the position of the Non-Aligned Movement. We have also heard the statement by the representative of the United States, which was prefaced with a question of time. He says that he will not have an answer until tomorrow morning, so do we continue discussing this proposal, or do we postpone discussion of it?

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): I just wish to make a point of clarification. I made my proposal on behalf of my delegation, not on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). However, I can also share with the Commission that NAM could basically go along with continuing discussion based on the draft that you are presenting now, Sir.

The Chairman: I am sorry about my assumption that the representative of Indonesia was speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We take note of the contributions from Indonesia, the Russian Federation and the United States. So how do we galvanize those now with the way that we proceed?

Ms. Paterson (United Kingdom): I just want to make a statement on behalf of the European Union that we, too, welcome your proposal, Sir, which we consider to be a solid basis for moving forward. We have heard comments from Indonesia with an indication that that might be the thinking of the Non-Aligned Movement, and we have also heard the comments from the United States. We would greatly favour further conversation and discussion of your proposal.

The Chairman: While we are considering this, let us take up the suggestion from Indonesia concerning the third line. I thought about it myself, but since a decision had not yet been taken, in fact I used "session(s)" deliberately, because it also relates to the issue of the cycle of the consideration of the issues and items of the Commission's work. Since I said that this particular issue of the cycle could be discussed informally before the next substantive meeting of the Commission, that is why I mentioned "session(s)".

Maybe we could start making some adjustments to my proposal here. Would we consider accepting the Indonesian proposal for the third line, to read as follows: "methods of the Commission will be considered in plenary at its 2006 substantive session", with the "(s)" deleted?

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I would advocate leaving it as it is or offering the following alternative to the Indonesian amendment: following the word "plenary", we would add "meeting(s)". My sense of it is that you formulated this, Sir, in a very deliberate way. The formulation means something, quite obviously, and I like what it means and I would like to preserve it.

The Chairman: In other words, having deleted the "(s)" after "session", the representative of the United States would like the phrase to read as follows: "will be considered in plenary meeting(s) at its 2006 substantive session".

Is it agreeable that we accept or amend the proposal so far by adding "meeting(s) at its 2006 substantive session", pending, of course, other amendments? As I hear no other comments, my proposal will be amended accordingly.

At this stage, let me read out my proposal as amended:

> "At its organizational meeting on 20 July 2005, the Disarmament Commission [also] agreed that the important issue of the revitalization and improvement of the working methods of the Commission will be considered in plenary meeting(s) at its 2006 substantive session of the Commission on the basis of equitable allocation [distribution] of time in the context of its two agenda items."

That is where we are now. Again, while awaiting further comments on the proposal, we have also heard from the representative of the Russian Federation, who asked about my intention or purpose of adding "in the context of its two agenda items". He needed some clarification on that, but I would rather first ask

delegations what they understand by it, because it could have several meanings. What do they understand by "in the context of its two agenda items"? Perhaps the representative of the Russian Federation would want to let me know what his delegation understands by "in the context of its two agenda items".

Mr. Litavrin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): English is not my mother tongue, but my understanding is that it would mean the same in Russian as it does in English, that is, "in the context of the first and second agenda items". Even in Russian, it seems to me that the phrase has a certain ambiguity.

The problem lies in the phrase "in the context of". We are not opposed to the text, but it is not entirely clear what is meant by "context". It could be understood as meaning improving the work of the Commission with regard to nuclear and conventional weapons, or it be construed somewhat differently as meaning "with respect to the time available and in the context of the Commission's work". The semantic meaning of the word is not quite clear and it could be interpreted in two ways. That is all I meant to say.

Mr. Gatan (Philippines): I wish to refer to the wording of the proposal that we have just adopted, because there is a technical adjustment to be made.

As is, the proposal reads in part "at its 2006 substantive session of the Commission". Perhaps we should change the word "its" to "the" or we could delete "of the Commission", because it is redundant. That is just an editorial suggestion.

The Chairman: I take note of the suggestion made by the representative of the Philippines.

Now, I should like to address the issue of the context of the two agenda item. I have taken note of the understanding of the representative of the Russian Federation. When we talk about equitable allocation or equitable distribution, we are talking about more than one thing. In my view, the word "equity" does not stand by itself. We talk about equity in the context of numbers, so when we say "the equitable allocation of time" — I assume, again, based on what the representative of the United States told us about wanting equal time and my response about equitable time — it emphasizes indirectly, among all the issues, that the time to be allocated will be allocated equitably in the context of or taking into account that there are two agenda items.

What I gather the representative of the United States was saying — and I may be wrong — is that if the agenda item on nuclear weapons should have four meetings, let us say, the item on conventional weapons should also have four meetings and discussion of the issue of revitalization should also enjoy four meetings. That is my understanding of "equal time". I therefore said that maybe we should look at "equitable" time and that we could discuss later how much time we will devote to it. That is the reason why I mentioned the fact that there are two agenda items, and we all agreed that there would be two agenda items.

While we are thinking about the time we are going to devote to the discussion of the issue of revitalization, we should do so in connection with the time that we are allocating to the agenda items. That is why I put it that way.

Ms. Paterson (United Kingdom): I wonder if I might offer a formula to replace "in the context of" that might possibly help us to clarify things. We could delete "in the context of" and perhaps substitute "with each of".

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): First of all, I would like to thank you for your proposal, Sir. At the same time, we have listened carefully to several proposals that have been made and we would like to express our support for the one made by the representative of Indonesia.

I would like to touch upon two points here. First, with regard to the latter part of the sentence, it seems that having included the words "in plenary meeting at its 2006 substantive session" clarifies the way in which we will be dealing with the issue of the working methods of the Commission. Hence, it seems, if I understand rightly, that this may be an aspect of the request for clarification that was made by our Russian colleague with regard to the latter part.

Maybe a way out here that would preserve clarity and, at the same time, make the proposal more precise would be to add a full stop after the word "session". In other words, the proposal would now read in part "the working methods of the Commission will be considered in plenary meeting(s) at its 2006 substantive session." When we come to the issue of the number of meetings and all that, I think it will be dealt with when we discuss the programme of work. Thus, we do not see any value added for the latter part of the proposal; on the contrary, it might be confusing to some extent.

The other element is on the second line. We would like to propose the deletion of the words "important issue" because they are of a subjective character, and I think the importance we attach to it, and whether it is really a crucial element in improving our working methods or whether there are other factors at play here, will be clear in the discussions on this issue.

Mr. Nguyen Duy Chien (Viet Nam): First, I would like to support the proposal made by our colleague from Egypt concerning the latter part of the proposal, because we understand that the main factor is the decision to consider the issue of the working methods of the Commission. For that reason, we can insert a full stop after the words "2006 substantive session".

Secondly, we also support the suggestion made by the representative of the Philippines to delete the words "of the Commission" after the words "its 2006 substantive session".

Lastly, we also consider that, in the second line, we might simply say "agreed that the issue of the revitalization and improvement of the working methods", without the word "important".

Mr. Gatan (Philippines): I just wish to indicate our support for the British proposal, which, I think, will give more clarity than the words "in the context of". Perhaps you may also wish to consider, Sir, the possible change of the word "equitable" — although I fully understand your idea on this issue — to the word "agreed", because normally the Bureau meets and allocates time, then passes it on to the plenary for approval. When that allocation of time is adopted, we will have an agreed time allocation. That would make it more clear, and I hope that will satisfy our Russian colleague.

Ms. Paterson (United Kingdom): In the spirit of trying to be helpful, I think the European Union would be content to see the word "important" dropped, if that would allay the concerns expressed by the representative of Egypt and others. I take the point that it is emotive, but at least 10 delegations yesterday expressed just how important it was to address that particular topic.

Secondly, the European Union would like to stress the fact that we feel it is important to have "equitable" time allocated, as you suggested in your proposal, Sir.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): English is not my mother tongue, but I am trying to make the last part of the text clearer. This is only a small proposal. Why do we not change the last part of the text to "in the context of its agreement on two agenda items"?

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I think the suggestion to remove the word "important" in the second line is something that the United States would not have a problem with. It does not need to be there.

The United Kingdom's suggestion on improving the second-to-last line of the paragraph by removing "in the context of" and replacing it with "each of" is, I think, very constructive as well.

The idea of maintaining the formulation "equitable allocation [distribution]" is something that, at least from the American perspective, is a deal breaker.

The Chairman: I had intended — at least, up to the suggestions by various delegations — to start off with the last line and then postpone discussion of the reference to the word "important" in the second line, but I would rather now start off with that.

It appears that delegations would be inclined to delete the word "important" in the second line. The representative of the United Kingdom would, I assume, understand why I used the word. In the discussion yesterday, many delegations said that this is an important issue which should be discussed in depth and given the quality of time that it deserves, and so on. That is why I used the word "important", but if representatives agree that we should delete it, we can go along and do so. It is therefore agreed that we will delete the word "important".

I will go back to "equitable" later on, but let us address the last phrase. The United Kingdom suggested earlier that we replace "in the context of its two agenda items" with "each of its two agenda items". I was going to ask whether we agree to make that substitution. However, since then, we have had another proposal from Indonesia, suggesting that we substitute "in the context of its two agenda items" with "agreement of its two agenda items".

How do we reconcile those two? The United Kingdom says "each of its two agenda items" and Indonesia says "agreement of its two agenda items".

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): We have listened to many proposals and suggestions. Indeed, we are facing two different proposals for the last part. This is the exact issue that was raised by our Russian colleague, because the present formulation might mean two different things to two different delegations.

The suggestion by our Indonesian colleague would mean that we agree to give equitable allocation of time while we agree on the two agenda items. It would mean that we link those two issues together. But the proposal from our colleague from the United Kingdom would mean that the allocation should be the same as that to other agenda items. For that reason, we should make it clear whether we want to allocate the same amount of time to this issue that we would give to the two agenda items or whether, as you mentioned yesterday, Sir, we can come to some kind of agreement as to when we are going to discuss the issue of the three-year period of the agenda and the programme of action.

One way would be to agree here to what was suggested by our Indonesian colleague that we adopt as a package two agenda items, as discussed yesterday, while at the same time allocating time to this issue. My delegation could support that, but if we cannot discuss that issue right now, perhaps, as suggested by our Egyptian colleague, we should postpone it to the November organizational session.

Miss Majali (Jordan): My colleague from Iran actually spoke before me on this subject. Basically, I have the same concern that was raised by the Russian delegation on the possibility that the words "in the context of" may be understood in two or three different ways. The proposal by the United Kingdom also has the same possibilities.

Perhaps we could say after "will be", in the third line, "allocated time to be considered" and then, at the end of the sentence, where we say "in the context of", we could say "alongside the two agreed agenda items", as our colleague from Indonesia suggested. That might be one way out. The other possibility would be just to stop after "session", as suggested by our colleague.

Mr. Bravaco (United States): Regrettably, Sir, your proposal has undergone a significant amount of vivisection, even at this early stage. But I am wondering now what you would suggest I submit to Washington, D.C., for instructions, because I am not sure what the proposal is anymore.

The Chairman: I hope we can resolve this issue. If not, then the state of affairs when we complete discussion is what we hope delegations will discuss with their respective capitals. Since we did not suspend the meeting to allow States to come back, delegations thought that we should start working on it and we have made some progress, so whatever progress we make could be transmitted to capitals. I hope that is quite clear.

Now, the phrase "equitable allocation" is, I think, the phrase that links the idea of the two agenda items. In other words, we have two parts: discussion of the issue of revitalization, on the one hand, and discussion or consideration of the agenda items, on the other. That is where the whole thing about equitable allocation of time came in.

If we keep "equitable allocation" — and for now maybe we can dispense with the word "[distribution]", just for discussion's sake — we can work it out on the basis of the suggestions of the United Kingdom and Indonesia, and I think I clearly understand what the Jordanian and Egyptian representatives said. We also have the option of stopping the whole thing after "substantive session". Maybe I should put it to the Commission first whether or not we agree to end the sentence at "substantive session", so that we do not waste time analysing and dissecting the other proposals, which are very interesting and valid. I would suggest that we take a decision on that.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I think the concept of equitable allocation is something that needs to be preserved in your formulation, Sir. I am flexible as to how that is done, but I think that wording is quite important. The initial American proposal was for a third agenda item, which would, in our view, necessitate a third working group. That is true equality in terms of how we allocate time, attention and resources for the Disarmament Commission next year.

We do not seem to be moving in that direction at this point, so I am wondering, if it is not going to be equal and we are not going to preserve the concept of "equitable", what is left? There has to be some sort of express statement that the relationship between the working groups and the interactive dialogue in terms of

the amount of time that is being devoted to the three issues is going to be equitable, if not equal. And if not, all of that work is to be done in three individual and separate working groups. I think that concept is key to getting us to agreement on the package.

The Chairman: I hate to analyse and interpret the interventions of delegations, but it appears to me that the United States is not in favour of ending the proposal after the words "substantive session".

Ms. Paterson (United Kingdom): I already made a statement earlier on behalf of the European Union that we deem equitable treatment to be significant to this. I think we would like to offer a sentence after "substantive session" in place of the current wording of the proposal, "of the Commission on the basis of equitable allocation [distribution] of time in the context of its two agenda items". That would be deleted, a full stop inserted after "substantive session", and a new sentence introduced that would read "The Commission also agreed that this would be allocated one third of time devoted to substantive discussion during the 2006 UNDC."

The Chairman: It is clear to me that the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union are not in favour of the idea of ending the text of the proposal after "substantive session". I assume, of course, that the United Kingdom is accordingly withdrawing the earlier suggestion of the phrase "with each of its two agenda items".

Ms. Paterson (United Kingdom): At the moment, I will leave that on the table. We are offering various suggestions, so I think we would still leave it there.

The Chairman: We note that it is still on the floor.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): If we can just, through you, Sir, request the representative of the United Kingdom to repeat her previous proposal.

Ms. Paterson (United Kingdom): I made two proposals. The second and last proposal was the following. It is a sentence that would be added at the end of "substantive session" on the third line of the Chairman's proposal. A full stop would be added after "substantive session", the remainder deleted, and the following inserted: "The Commission also agreed that this would be allocated one third of time devoted to substantive discussion during the 2006 UNDC."

The other proposal was to delete the words "in the context of" on the penultimate line and insert "with each of". The penultimate line would thus read: "Commission on the basis of equitable allocation [distribution] of time with each of its two agenda items".

The Chairman: I understand that the second proposal, which the representative of the United Kingdom just read out, is still on the floor.

Ms. Soni (Canada): I just wanted belatedly to add my voice in support of keeping the text with reference to equitable allocation of time in the context of the other two agenda items. As members will recall here, Canada, during discussion in the First Committee on this matter, suggested that the Disarmament Commission devote its entire session to an examination of its working methods. We therefore attach great importance to the issue and feel that more than just one or two meetings would be necessary.

Mr. Litavrin (Russian Federation): Unfortunately or happily, I do not know which, we started this discussion. But as for the British proposal, we would prefer the first one.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): The United States believes that the United Kingdom's proposal to add a second sentence is a very useful contribution. It provides precision on what we are talking about here, which I think will serve us well down the road.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have a comment on the second proposal made by our colleague from the United Kingdom. Indeed, I believe that the formulation she presented is a little far from what we agreed. Specifying one third of the session is not the same as equitable allocation, and I am afraid that this delegation cannot go along with that.

Mr. Nguyen Duy Chien (Viet Nam): We have some difficulties with the new proposal made by the United Kingdom concerning the allocation of one third of time during the 2006 session of the Disarmament Commission. Our preference is to add a full stop after "its 2006 substantive session".

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): With regard to the second proposal made by the representative of the United Kingdom, I am sure that, being a native English speaker, she will understand very well why we would not be in a position to go along with that formulation.

At the same time, we are flexible in regard to working with the language to try and find clear language that transmits very precisely what we mean and what we want to achieve. Therefore, we are willing to look at all sorts of language that might achieve that.

Miss Majali (Jordan): My delegation is also responding to the latest United Kingdom proposal. We heard earlier that the United States, which had a difficulty, insisted on retaining the words "equitable allocation", so perhaps we can work on the basis of the latest United Kingdom proposal, adding a full stop and a new sentence. In addition, in order to respond to the positions just stated by other representatives, we would replace "one third of the time" with "equitable allocation of time". That is just a proposal aimed at meeting the needs of others here.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina): Thank you very much for your proposal, Mr. Chairman. We believe that it provides the basis for a good compromise. However, it seems to me that the more we speak about your proposal, the more ideas we have and the more creative we become — and also the more confused. So perhaps my suggestion would be to try to stick as much as we can to the language you provided us. Making small changes, such as with regard to the words "in the context of", might be a bit confusing, as the representative of Russia explained.

My proposal, Sir, would be that, after the words "will be considered" in the third line, we move to the fourth line, "on the basis of equitable allocation [distribution] of time with each of its two agenda items", and then come back to the third line, "in plenary meetings at its 2006 substantive session".

Mr. Mc Guire (Grenada): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the text that you have provided us. From the perspective of my delegation, however, the difficulty of the work that we are doing seems to be approaching that of drafting a constitution. By way of trying to clarifying my own understanding: the United States delegation has talked about having a third working group; others have talked about discussing revitalization as part of the two agenda items; the representative of Canada has reminded us that her delegation proposed even devoting a session to the issue of revitalization; and we are discussing the matter of how much time is to be allocated to the issue of revitalization and exactly how that time is to be allocated to a new working group and to the two agenda items.

Most of us here have experienced the difficulty of trying to revitalize the General Assembly. As we will recall, we have been provided with significant materials that were prepared by the Secretariat in dealing with the revitalization of the Assembly. So the problem that my delegation is wrestling with is not the question of how much time is to be allocated and how that time is to be divided, but rather what resources we will have for a serious treatment, analysis and discussion of revitalization. My delegation is quite small, and even having two working groups poses a significant personnel problem for us. But, beyond that, what kind of materials will we have? What sort of analysis will be available to us? What kind of review of the history of the Disarmament Commission will be in front of us so that we can make the kind of analysis that a true and serious discussion of revitalization calls for?

Any information about that would indeed be useful, because it seems to me that, in a way, we are going backwards. We are worrying about allocation of time, another working group, what have you, without first considering how much time will be necessary to deal with this serious question — and my delegation is assuming that it is a serious question and that it will be treated as such. But what sort of time will we need, once we understand what this revitalization process will require?

The Chairman: I think we have had some very good suggestions. I believe that all of them were presented in good faith with the objective of facilitating our work.

I think that at this point, we should take a look at two proposals in the context of my own proposal without prejudice to the others. The representative of the United Kingdom stated that the first suggestion, concerning the phrase "with each of its two agenda items", was still on the table. We take note of that and of all the other suggestions. But I wonder whether, just to facilitate our work, we could focus our attention a bit on two proposals that were read out to us — the first by the representative of the United Kingdom and the second by the representative of Argentina — and whether we could look at those as a way out.

Again, I think that the phrases "equitable allocation" and "equal time" are creeping into our

discussion, so we have to make it clear among ourselves exactly what we want. Is it equity or strict equality? I gathered from our discussion that the word "equitable" was mentioned because some delegations were in favour of "equitable", while others were talking about "equal" time. I recognize that. But it appears to me that the consensus was leaning towards some kind of equitable distribution or allocation of time.

These two suggestions — one by the United Kingdom, which has just been read out to us, and the other by Argentina — contain the two elements "equitable" and "equal" time. So we have to reconcile this. As we seek a way out of our discussion towards some progress, we might want to focus our attention on this, at least for the time being, and see how we proceed.

The United Kingdom is saying that the Commission would also agree that this would be allocated one third of the time which is devoted to discussion during the 2006 session. I think Jordan made an amendment to that, saying that it also agreed that equitable time would be allocated. "Equity" was injected into the United States/United Kingdom proposal. Then, the Argentine proposal said that it would be considered on the basis of "equitable allocation of time with each of its agenda items in plenary", and so forth.

Could we just have a look at these two proposals and see whether we can reconcile the concept of equity and equality?

Miss Majali (Jordan): My delegation would be in a position to work on either of the two proposals, Sir, bearing in mind the amendment, of which you just rightly reminded the Commission, which we had presented basically to try and solve the problem that was put forward by a number of States.

With respect to the Argentine proposal, we have no problem with it; the only thing is the latter part. When we add "with each of its two agenda items", it again brings the same possibilities on board, as were brought forward by the Russian delegation at one point and then, later, by the Iranian delegation. If we decide to accept the Argentine proposal, we can stop after "plenary meeting" and forget about the rest of the sentence, "with each of its two agenda items". It seems to me that whenever we bring in a preposition, different meanings seem to be associated with it.

This is just a suggestion; again, we are ready to work on either of the proposals, since both of them are based on the Chairman's proposal, which has been accepted by our group and other groups here.

The Chairman: Are there any other comments on these two proposals and how to reconcile them? I have another direction in which to go, but I would like to listen to members first.

Ms. Paterson (United Kingdom): I have been listening to various colleagues, and it seems to me that the United Kingdom has managed to indicate fairly clearly to everybody what we understand by "equitable". In order to try and further this debate so that we can avoid misunderstandings, I should like, through you, Sir, to ask the delegations of Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Iran what they would mean by "equitable", so that we can then work seriously on this text and try and produce a proposal on which we can all agree.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt): I will convey our response later to the representative of the United Kingdom.

To save time and in line with what I said earlier — that what we always aim at is plain and simple language — I would like to make an attempt at a very simple proposal which, I think, would take on board the various concerns. It would read as follows: "in plenary meetings at its 2006 substantive session, with equitable time to be allocated to it".

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): With regard to the question by our colleague from the United Kingdom, I also have a counter-question: what does she mean by "one third" of the substantive discussion?

My understanding from yesterday's and earlier discussions, is that since there had been no consensus on the issue of a third agenda item, you, Sir, tried and proposed to accommodate the concerns of our colleague from the United States with regard to the discussion of improvement of the methods of work. Here, I emphasize the title that was proposed by the United States, and not the title that you have in your text.

You proposed that the Commission could allocate some time as a kind of interaction, or plenary discussion, on that issue in order to have an exchange of views by member States. That is my understanding of the phrase "equitable allocation of time". My understanding is that we should not try to reduce the

time that should be allocated to the working group to the point that there would be no results from the group. That is one of our main concerns.

So, we are ready and we are flexible, as the representative of Indonesia said on the first day on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We are flexible in considering this issue and in discussing it very constructively and cooperatively, with a specific time to be allocated; this would be done in a programme of work to be discussed later on. That is our understanding on this issue.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): Very briefly, I just want to note that the United States proposal on establishing a third agenda item is still on the table. That would be the most equitable, fair and balanced solution. Each issue gets its own agenda item and its own working group: that is one way to look at the word "equitable". I am not sure precisely what it means in the context of your proposal, Sir, especially now that it has been amended quite a bit.

Perhaps we could have some guidance from the Chair as to what he does or does not mean, or maybe we want to just fudge it. I mean, equitable geographic distribution in that particular context usually means equal allocation — of seats or whatever is being distributed. I suppose context is important here. But in some other contexts, "equitable" means "equal".

Mr. Nguyen Duy Chien (Viet Nam): First, if I understand things correctly, the amendment to the Chairman's proposal put forth by the representative of the United Kingdom is based on the equitable allocation of time for each of the two agenda items. However, the representative of the United Kingdom recently made another proposal. As I understand it, the first amendment and the second proposal by the United Kingdom are different. We have problems with the latest proposal by the United Kingdom.

I believe that it was the representative of Argentina who recently proposed making a change, namely, taking the last part of the Chairman's proposal and placing it before the words "in plenary meetings". I therefore think that the first proposed amendment offered by the delegation of the United Kingdom is the same as the Argentine proposal.

In that context, and given the fact that other delegations want to retain the content of the last portion of the Chairman's proposal, we can go along with the Chairman's proposal as amended by the United Kingdom initially, but not with the latest United Kingdom amendment. As I explained before, as amended by the United Kingdom, the Chairman's first proposal is different from the latest version put forth by the United Kingdom.

The Chairman: I have listened to the various proposals and arguments. At this point, I would just propose the following possible compromise to the Commission for its consideration. We could drop "in the context of its two agenda items" from my proposed text. The sentence would therefore refer to "on the basis of equitable allocation of time".

With regard to the other amendments concerning meetings, we could retain the third line and delete the word "important" from the second line.

In short, I am suggesting that, as a way out, we may perhaps consider returning to my proposal, as amended, and accepting my suggestion that we delete the last phrase, namely, "in the context of its two agenda items". I have done this in the context of the two proposals that have been made, by the United Kingdom and by Argentina, while of course also taking into consideration the other proposals by the United Kingdom, by Jordan and by Indonesia — which mentioned "alongside the two agenda items". We may not want to make any direct reference to the two agenda items. Where we refer to "equitable allocation of time", it is understood that equity would be used in the allocation of time.

That is the reason I said that we should deal with this in depth. There is no harm expressing in principle what our intention is. We will come face to face with reality when we deal with the general work programme itself, which was distributed on 8 December 2004 in conference room paper 1 and which contains several boxes. I know delegations have that document, which was distributed earlier at the organizational meeting. We can look at all those boxes. In fact, I recall that I gave certain delegations copies of that document during informal discussions. I told them to look at it to see what they could fill in those boxes in terms of the allocation of time.

In other words, what we are doing here is just expressing ideas in principle, which is why I used the words "equitable distribution". We can then go to work by dovetailing the issues, the agenda and what have you within the outline of the work programme we are

dealing with. We are not shirking the issue. But I thought that we should perhaps deal with the issue of "equitable".

I believe that I referred to "equitable" rather than "equal" time. I think that it was the representative of the United States who mentioned "equal" time. I may be wrong, but I got the impression from him that the United States could go along with "equitable" or "apportioned equitably".

To recapitulate, I would like, as a way out, to suggest to the Commission that we drop from my proposal the reference to "in the context of its two agenda items".

Mr. Baldi (Italy): I have listened very carefully to you, Mr. Chairman, as you are now trying to find a solution. I very much appreciate your efforts.

Of course, I fully support all the proposals made by the European Union (EU) in this context. I still believe that we are all — and when I say "all" I do not mean only the EU, but also the other countries taking part in this discussion — making every possible effort to find a solution. I really appreciate the Chairman's initial proposal, as well as all the changes thereto, although my note paper is filling up and becoming more and more confused each time I put down something new.

I wanted to take the floor because I have the impression — although it was not my initial impression — that, by now, the problem is becoming one of what the meaning of "equitable" is, which we are mixing up with "equity" and many other concepts that, coming from different countries, we may interpret differently in our own minds. I do not think that is really going to help focus our attention on the work now before us.

I was therefore wondering whether, in an effort to provide the Mediterranean interpretation of "equitable", we should not try to change the word and make it clearer. What I understand by the word is "the same amount of time" — speaking in this context, of course, because it can be dangerous to use "equitable" in different contexts. But, in this context, what I understand is that we want to use the same amount of time for each of the two agenda items. I cannot see other interpretations than that. But, again, that may be due to my underlying Mediterranean Sea origins.

If the problem is really one of interpreting "equitable" — which would also mean that we may again encounter this problem in the future — then why do we not try to see whether, very simply, the concept of allocating the same amount of time devoted to each of the two agenda items could make it clearer for everybody? I think that everyone's interest is just to have something clear that will allow us to work in a substantive way, and not in a procedural way alone.

The Chairman: Do I understand correctly that the understanding of the Italian representative is that "equitable time" should be interpreted as meaning "the same amount of time"? The Chair's understanding is that that is probably what his delegation wants, namely, that, going back to what we discussed yesterday, the two agenda items would be given the same amount of time, including consideration of the revitalization of the Commission's working methods.

To put it simply, therefore, my suggestion about dropping "in the context of the two agenda items" is still on the table. What I am now prepared to do is to look at the proposal by the Italian delegation. Do we agree that the same amount of time should be allocated to the two agenda items and to the discussion of the issue of the revitalization and improvement of the Commission's working methods? That is the question.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My recollection is that, up until now, we were discussing "equitable allocation of time", not "equal allocation of time" or "the same amount of time". That is a new proposal.

Mr. Litavrin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have no problem whatever with the proposal made by the representative of Italy. But I would like to say that a lack of precision here could at times facilitate our work more than would be the case if everything were clearly spelled out.

The question is therefore what we are trying to resolve here. We are trying to resolve a very complex issue. We have achieved a lot. We have agreed on a number of agenda items on an *ad referendum* basis. We have also made progress towards agreeing on the text of the proposal presented to us today by the Chairman. As a basis for our work, I believe that the wording that the representatives of the United Kingdom and Argentina suggested adding to his proposal would more fully reflect the understanding we have reached

here in this room. However, all the other proposals are also still on the table.

I would propose that we not go into further clarification of the issue at this stage. On the basis of the basic agreement we have achieved, at the moment we should not go into detail about what will take place in plenary meeting, what discussions will occur and how every minute of time will be allocated. Those are not at all the most important issues. The most important issue is to agree on the meaning of the Chairman's proposal.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I think that "equity" and "equality" are very much part of what the original proposal of the United States was all about. We came to this organizational session with instructions to propose a third agenda item and to insist upon equal treatment of all issues on the agenda.

I take note of the views of the representative of Italy with regard to perhaps just saying what we mean. On the other hand, I have tried to be flexible and have not insisted upon a third agenda item. We have gone down a new road, under, I might add, the very able leadership of the Chairman. I am trying to be flexible, but there has to be some way to signify that there is going to be, if not equality in terms of the number of agenda items, equitable treatment in some other fashion. I think the arrangement has to convey that message expressly, in one way or another. The easiest way to do that is from an operational or planning perspective, in terms of the allocation of meeting time. It does not necessarily mean that one issue is more important than the other. As far as the United States is concerned, we are not going to get too hung up on whether there is a working group on confidence-building measures or whether revitalization will not have one. We are not going to be overly concerned about that, but we are going to insist that there be general equality among the issues in terms of how much time is devoted to each in the course of next year's three-week session.

Ms. Paterson (United Kingdom): We very much appreciate the efforts that you are making, Mr. Chairman, and the progress that you have made to date. I am keenly aware that we only have about 50 minutes or so until the end of this morning's meeting. But I wonder whether you would be willing to grant us a suspension of about 10 minutes, perhaps for representatives to move about and exchange some ideas. I think it would be helpful.

The Chairman: Before I address the request made by the representative of the United Kingdom, I would like to give the floor to the next speaker.

Mrs. El Alaoui (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that I take the floor, allow me to congratulate the Chairman on his assumption of the Commission's chairmanship, as well as to thank him on behalf of the delegation of Morocco for putting the Disarmament Commission back on track. That is a very gratifying achievement that could perhaps not been foreseen at the beginning of this session.

I too must join this semantic discussion to determine whether there is a difference between the words "equity" and "equality". As I, like the representative of Italy, also belong to the Mediterranean culture, I would simply like to say frankly that there is in fact some difference between equity and equality. Equality means strict allocation and equity means seeking equality without really necessarily achieving it. I say that simply to point out that, after two hours of debate, it seems to me that, as he has formulated it, the Chairman's proposal, including the amendments put forth by Indonesia earlier this morning, is indeed the best proposal. I fully realize that the latter part of the proposal, which includes the phrase "of time in the context of the two agenda items" is a bit ambiguous, but that ambiguity has some merit. I therefore wonder whether the Chairman's proposal, as he worded it this morning and including the amendments that have been put forth, is not really the best solution available to us. I believe that the confusion at this meeting perhaps stems from the fact that we are negotiating the Chairman's proposal while at the same time having already moved on to discussing the programme of work. Perhaps the way out is to distinguish between the two. Let us first adopt the Chairman's proposal, and thereafter consider the precise allocation of meetings and so on, which really has to do with the programme of work itself.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina): My delegation strongly supports, and fully endorses the statement we have just heard from the representative of Morocco. In fact, after two hours of discussion, my delegation's impression is that we have heard some proposed amendments from the representative of Indonesia. We assume that those amendments were accepted in

principle, as no delegation spoke against them or tried to amend them.

There was also a question with regard to the phrase "in the context of" in the fourth line of the Chairman's proposal. We nevertheless hope that the matter is now clear to the delegation that raised that question. It is my understanding that that delegation has also supported the ambiguity in the last part of the sentence.

Again, I totally share with the delegation of Morocco the impression that we are very near to reaching agreement on the Chairman's proposal, including the amendments put forth by Indonesia earlier this morning. It would therefore perhaps be wise to suspend the meeting for five minutes, after we have clarified that no comments were made about those amendments and that the question had already been answered.

The Chairman: I think everyone realizes where we are. As I said earlier, all the suggestions that have been made have been very good ones. What we must do this morning is to determine how to marry all of them into a text that we can accept *ad referendum*, by consensus or otherwise.

I shall now suspend the meeting for no more than 15 minutes. I hope that we shall be able to reconvene at 12.30 p.m.. As I said — and I am not imposing this — if it is possible for groups of delegations to interact with each other, they should by all means do so. I think that would facilitate our work. I think it would be most welcome if the European Group or the Group of Non-Aligned countries were touch base with each other in order to facilitate our work.

The meeting was suspended at 12.15 p.m. and resumed at 12.40 p.m.

The Chairman: I understand that the suspension turned out to be productive. I also understand that, as I expected, there was interaction within groups and across the various groups and that, as a result of that interaction, there is consensus on the issue of the revitalization of the Disarmament Commission's working methods. I further understand that, also as a result of consultation and interaction, I am now in a position to read out the consensus text regarding this particular issue. That text reads as follows:

> "At its organizational meeting on 20 July 2005, the Disarmament Commission [also] agreed that the issue of measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Disarmament Commission will be considered in plenary meetings at its 2006 substantive session, with equitable time allocated to it."

The word "also" was bracketed because it is contingent upon the Commission's final report.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, I would like to express our support for the proposal just read out by the Chairman. However, later on we will read out a very humble request. We agree on the overall package; our proposal will be only for the sake of clarity.

Ms. Paterson (United Kingdom): We heard various delegations comment on the term "equitable" this morning. Based on those discussions, the European Union would be happy to go along with the Chairman's revised proposal. We accept that the exact allocation of time is an issue that will be addressed at the organizational meeting scheduled for later this year. We hope that we have clearly indicated on behalf of the European Union what our position will be once the work programme is finally decided.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I would just like to note that I will be consulting with Washington overnight, and will have an answer on the current formulation of the proposal in the morning. I can report, though, that I am going to give it my best and most favourable review, as I think that it provides a very useful way forward. I think that there has been compromise on all sides. I will see what Washington has to say, and will be prepared to let the entire Commission know tomorrow morning.

The Chairman: Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Commission agrees to adopt the text that I have just read out as the compromise solution to the problem of handling the issue of the Disarmament Commission's working methods.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: That text will appear in the Commission's final report.

The next issue is the question of where we go from here. I decided to handle our problems incrementally, and we have overcome three obstacles in our way, if one can describe them that way. In fact, there is only one way of describing them, namely, as

three obstacles. In another sense, we have resolved three problems. Now, where do we go from here in the 2005 organizational session?

I began yesterday by suggesting that we might consider giving ourselves more time to reflect on what we have achieved. As many of us — most of us — were not expecting these results, they came as a welcome surprise. I think it would be in the interest of the Commission if we were to give ourselves an opportunity to discuss other important issues during a new organizational meeting later this year, in November and December. In other words, I am proposing that we decide to adjourn the 2005 organizational session once we have adopted the report of the Commission, and then hold a new organizational session in November or December, after the First Committee has completed its work. I hope that, at that time, we will be better equipped to deal with the substantive issues relating to the agenda items we have already approved.

Another reason is that many delegations have expressed the concern that they may not have the required expertise to handle the new development that has taken place. In other words, they do not have full delegations that can discuss the issues in detail. That is one of the other reasons why we believe that we might want to wait until 2006 to hold a substantive discussion on what we have achieved.

In line with existing practice, therefore, the Commission will hold the 2006 substantive session, for a period of about three weeks, in March and April next year, when we will discuss in detail the agenda items that we have approved this week.

Concerning the dates for the 2006 substantive session, the Commission may wish to entrust a representative of the Bureau with submitting to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly an appropriate draft resolution proposing those dates.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to proceed accordingly.

Mr. Charwath (Austria): This is certainly not an objection at all — just a request for clarification in terms of procedure. If we adopt this text, with all of the *ad referendum* elements that we still have, we would be adopting the report for the 2005 substantive session, I take it, and then in November the 2006 organizational meeting would take place? Is that the correct understanding?

The Chairman: The representative of Austria is correct. My proposal is that, if members agree, we will discuss — I was coming to that — this week's report. Representatives have already received copies of the report of the Commission, to which we will issue an amendment taking into account the progress that we have made. We intend to distribute that this afternoon. I propose that we meet tomorrow afternoon to give delegations time to hold discussions with capitals, and, hopefully, we will be able to adopt the report tomorrow afternoon.

I should like to add that the Chair, with the assistance of the Bureau, will continue informal consultations and will present the outcome of those consultations to the organizational session of the Disarmament Commission in November and December.

A lot of work remains to be done. For instance, we must deal with the chairmanship of the two working groups. Also pending is the composition of the Bureau; we need to have the nominations for the rest of the membership of the Bureau. I know that we are going to be very busy with the General Assembly, but a lot of work has to be done. As I said, although we can commend ourselves on what we have achieved, we should realize also that a great deal also lies ahead.

We also, as I was saying earlier, must think about how we can dovetail the agenda items and the issue of revitalization into the work programme. That is when we will be translating into action the concept of equity, and so on. If we devote as much time as possible in the next few months to these efforts, that will help us to work productively during the 2006 substantive session.

As members are aware, the Assembly, in resolution 59/105 of December last, requested the Commission to submit a substantive report to the Assembly at its sixtieth session, so, as I said, we will be working on that and will complete it by tomorrow.

We have made remarkable progress. We have been able to fill those two yawning gaps in paragraph 5 of resolution 59/105 with respect to the agenda items. We have been successful in that those gaps will no longer exist.

The draft report will appear as CRP.2/Rev.1.

Are there any other comments?

Ms. Paterson (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, I shall be brief. I should just like to offer the European Union's thanks and to express our support for the direction in which you are taking us.

The Chairman: I think that all of us are responsible for our success. One last thing: the Commission will note that I have removed the phrase "*ad referendum*" and the word "tentative", and so on, from the report. I did so last night, because I believe that it is no longer necessary for us to say *ad referendum*, because we are talking about the provisional agenda; that implies that it is tentative, it is *ad referendum*, just as the agenda of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly is a provisional agenda which will be screened by the General Committee and has to be adopted. We therefore expect that, with respect to what we have achieved this week, the agenda items will have to go through that final process of adoption. Therefore I have removed or deleted references to *ad referendum* or "tentative".

Therefore, unless the Commission objects, I shall assume that we agree to a provisional agenda for the 2006 substantive session of the Commission. I hope that members will not be surprised by the deletion of the phrase "ad referendum". This is a provisional agenda subject to the approval of the Commission when we meet to discuss the substance of these agenda items.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m.